Poaching in Chilka Lake

4700. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chilka Development Authority in Orissa has taken a number of steps to wean away poachers from killing birds in Chilka Lake, during 2001 and 2002; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As informed by the State Government of Orissa, the following steps have been taken by the State Government to wean away poachers from killing birds:

(i) Fifty-six potential poachers of Sorana village have been extended financial assistance in the form of DRI Bank loan for adopting alternative sources of livelihood.

(ii) To encourage community participation in protection of birds of Chilka, an award namely 'Pakhibandhu' (Friends of the Birds) has been initiated by the Chilka Development Authority.

(iii) Extensive awareness programme has been launched with the help of Non Government Organisations and other community based organisations.

Stockholm convention

4701. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has decided to sign the Stockholm convention, a landmark Treaty, which focuses on reducing and eliminating release of 12 of the most dangerous persistence organic pollutants;

(b) if so, what would be the purpose of this agreement;

(c) whether under this agreement the country would achieve total phase out of production of Chlorofluorocation and Carbontetrachloride by 2010; and

(d) if so how many countries have signed this agreement?

THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONEMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) The Government of India has decided to sign the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The Convention seeks the elimination and/or restriction of production and use of 12 highly hazardous substances. As on 5th April, 2002, 126 countries have signed the Stockholm Convention. Phase out of Chlorofluorocarbons and Carbontetrachloride are not covered under the Stockholm Convention.

Rate of deforestation

4702. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have assessed the rate of deforestation;

(b) whether it is a fact that deforestation is taking place at alarming rate; and

(c) if so, the steps taken to prevent it?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The various steps taken by the Government to check deforestation are:

(i) Afforestation pogrammes are undertaken by State Governments/U.T. Administrations from their own resources as well as with financial assistance from Government of India.

(ii) Externally aided projects are being implemented for development and preservation of forests.

(iii) Guidelines have been issued to all States/U.T.s to involve village communities in protection and regeneration of degraded forests.

(iv) Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 has been enacted to regulate the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes.

(v) A network of protected areas has been established.